

JEREMIAH SPLINKETY-SPLUNK



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Jeremiah Splinkety-Splunk

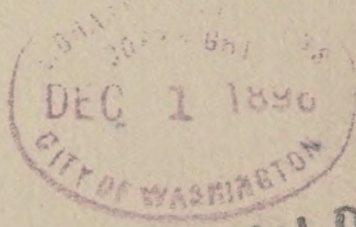
AND OTHER FAIRY TALES

BY

Cransand
HENRY T. SCUDDER

RECTOR OF ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

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TO
EDNA HEWLETT
FOR WHOM
THESE TALES WERE WRITTEN

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JEREMIAH SPLINKETY-SPLUNK.

HIS house was as queer as his name. Jeremiah Splinkety-Splunk lived on the side of a hill in a house painted green and without any doors. When he wanted to go out he climbed down a rope ladder he let down from upstairs. He had a long rope which he could let down to the ground, and to it he fastened a basket whenever he wanted to take anything into his home. Of course you wonder why he did not go out a window on the first floor and walk right out. This he could have done, but he had no windows there big enough. All the windows downstairs were very little and round, just like the portholes of a ship. Then the house had no chimneys, just a big hole in the roof, which could be closed up whenever Jeremiah

wanted. He had a great flagpole on top of the house, and to it was fastened a great yellow-colored balloon, which he never used from the day he made it. There it had hung all the time since it had first been made and filled with gas. Every one wondered why it had not been used ; but Jeremiah would say he was waiting for the circus to come to Splunkville and then he would use it.

It was now nearly thirty years since the house had been built and the balloon hung out, and still no circus came to town, for it was off from the main railroad and hard to get to. During all this long period of years Jeremiah would look out of his bedroom window every morning and night to find out, if it was at all possible to do so, whether Big Swindleum's Circus had come. One day he was most happy, for he heard that the great show was to come on the first night of the full moon. Jeremiah immediately looked carefully over the huge

balloon to be sure all was ready for the great excursion he was going to take.

Then he packed a bagful of sweet potatoes and another of shirts and hats. These he carefully fastened to the bottom of the balloon. Then he began to watch for the circus, which had to pass right by his house. He put on his head a red cap trimmed with yellow ribbons. He wore a pair of gloves much too big for him, and in his pocket he carried a huge revolver. Looking through his glass, he could see nothing, so he decided to go down in the garden and pick peas for dinner, and look at his sweet-potato vines. He forgot to shut up his telescope, and carried it in his hand. And as he went along a most wonderful thing happened : the sun shone most brightly through the glass and right on the potato vines, and suddenly they grew and very quickly. Soon they were spreading up and around the spot where he was standing, and he found himself being lifted up

in the air. Soon he was up as high as the flagstaff, and the wind took him across towards the balloon. He was so surprised that he gave a jump and landed right on top of the yellow silk and fell through a little door into the inside. He tried to get out, but could not, and his kicks and shakes only served to unfasten the string from the flagstaff, and away went the balloon.

It went up very high and flew along very fast, and finally began to come down, as Jeremiah, now quite frightened, had managed to cut a hole in the side and let out quite a lot of air. He looked out through the hole and found he was falling very quickly into a big pond in which there seemed to be a number of black specks which looked like turtles. Then he heard a great noise on the bank of the pond, and saw there a number of men who were looking at his balloon coming down, and who seemed to want it to keep far away from where

they were. He began to stick his feet out of the hole so as to be able to swim when he struck the water. He could not then see what was happening at the pond. The black specks were the elephants from the circus taking their baths. As the balloon came down they stood up and started towards the shore, but the biggest one did not move as quickly as the others. Before he could get out of the pond, down, plump on his back, fell poor Jeremiah Splinkety-Splunk with his yellow silk bag. The elephant gave a jump and a snort, and ran along the road as hard as he could, and into a great barn full of hay. Jeremiah managed to get out of the silk and jumped off the elephant into the hay, where he lay down, too tired to move, and fell fast asleep.

He slept so soundly that he did not hear the men come in and take the elephant out. Nor did he hear them talking about his yellow silk bag, and wonder how an empty balloon had

come down on the big beast's back. He tried, when he awoke, to look around and see where he was, but it was dark and still. Soon the moon came up, and then he saw a ladder. He climbed down it very carefully, and found right by the door a little donkey harnessed to a cart. He opened the door, looked around, and could see no one. He found he was right on the street, so he pinned up one of his cards and wrote on it what he thought would explain all to the owner :

“ Jeremiah Splinkety-Splunk
Has gone with donkey
To Funkety Flunk,
And there you will find him, I say.”

He thought this very good poetry, and it would explain all to the owner, who happened to be a little boy of five who could not read any kind of writing. He also did not know that he was over two hundred miles from

home, and had to cross a river, lake, and high mountains. Away he went down the street knowing nothing of the commotion in the barn, where the coachman had gone from the house to take the donkey out of the cart. There was no donkey, no cart, and the card was not seen until the next morning.

On went Jeremiah, beating the donkey all the time, and wondering where he was, and how far from his home. Soon he heard a roar as of water falling, and it all the while became plainer. He looked ahead and saw the road went down a steep hill and into a big wood. Down the hill he went and into the dark forest, and before he could stop the donkey, he found himself in a river, and the water over the donkey's head. The poor beast tried to swim, and the frightened Splinkety-Splunk tried to catch hold of his neck. He was just going to get out of the cart, when smash went the shafts, and Jeremiah went floating away down the

river. He could hear the roar of the falls, and knew he was getting nearer to them. Every moment he expected he would reach them and be drowned. He had given up all hope, when he saw a branch of a tree hanging over the side of the river where he was. As the cart swept by he caught the branch and swung himself on a big flat rock. There he sat down, wondering what to do next. He looked carefully around and noticed the rock went towards the shore, and the bright moonlight showed him where he could step on some other rocks and get on land.

Poor Jeremiah sat for a long time on the flat rock, wondering what was the best thing to do. At last, seeing the moon had almost sunk behind the mountains, he decided to go ashore. He walked carefully over the rocks, and finally found himself on the bank and under some large pine trees. He was so tired that soon he was fast asleep, and did not wake

up until long after noon. He might not have then awakened, save for a great noise right over his head. Looking up in the trees, he saw some big eagles fighting each other and screeching all the while. He shouted to stop them, and they, hearing the sound of his voice, looked down. Seeing him, they stopped their fighting, and flew down to catch him. It was well for little Splinkety-Splunk that he saw them coming, or they might have dug their sharp claws into him, and there would have been no more to tell about Jeremiah. He quickly jumped to one side as they came down, and in his terror gave a spring and landed on the back of the largest bird.

The eagle, finding a weight on his back, tried to shake it off. The more he shook the tighter held on Jeremiah, who had fastened his arms tightly around the bird's neck. Then the eagle started to fly, now frightened by having something on his back which could not be shaken

off. The other eagles had flown off as soon as they saw what was on the back of the other bird, so the little man was all alone on the side of the wild mountain, rising slowly in the air. After a while he found himself away up in the air, and, of course, held on all the tighter, as he was afraid every moment he might drop. Soon he found himself away up above the mountain, and he looked around a little to see where he was. On all sides were great high mountains, and straight ahead was one higher than all the rest and covered with snow. When he saw that, he was in great fear lest the bird might let him down in the snow, and then he never could get out, and would soon perish with the cold. So fearful did he become that he, without knowing it, kicked out with his feet. This only made the bird fly still more quickly, and soon they were over the top of the snow mountain. Then he looked down and saw a great sheet of water, which was so

large it almost looked at first like the ocean ; but, looking more closely, he saw land away off in the distance, and knew it must be a lake. The eagle began to be very tired carrying all this load for so long a time ; so he began to slowly sink down to the ground. Lower and lower he sank, until finally he landed in a large oak tree. Jeremiah lost no time in climbing off his back and climbing down towards the ground. He did not think of anything except to get out of the tree as fast as he could. He had reached the lowest branch, when he heard some one scream, and, losing his balance, he fell plump into a great kettleful of water. He looked around and saw no one. Climbing out of the kettle, he found everything ready to light a fire, and the vegetables and meat by the fire to make a nice soup with. He was so hungry that he quickly lit the fire and soon had a good soup made, which he greatly enjoyed. Then he began to look around still

more and found some bags. He opened them and found all but one filled with diamonds and rubies ; the other bag had gold. The bags were not very large, and so he put them in his pockets, and, feeling very tired, he crawled into a thick hedge and fell asleep.

He was awakened by the sound of voices, and, listening, he heard some men talking. He found out from their conversation that they were brigands, and had been frightened away by his dropping into the kettle. After a while their courage had come back and they had returned to get all their jewels and gold, and to eat their dinner. They were surprised to find the soup and the fire, and to see no signs of their valuables. After eating some soup, they looked all around for the bags. They were just going to beat the thicket where Jeremiah was, when the eagle, who had fallen asleep, woke up. He smelt the nice soup, and, being very hungry, swooped down with a tremen-

dous cry. This so frightened the brigands that they ran away and never came back. The eagle ate up all that was left in the kettle, and then flew away.

Then Jeremiah carefully crept out from the hedge on the other side, and found himself in a large field, which was full of corn. He walked along through it for two or three miles, and then came out on the shore of the great lake. It was almost sunset, and he wanted to find a house where he could sleep for the night. On the shore he found an old boat which had just floated up there. He jumped in and hoisted a sail which he found, and started off. He had never been in a sailboat before, and did not know how to manage one. He forgot to put on the rudder, so he could steer, nor did he understand how to keep the sail filled with the gentle wind which was blowing.

Soon he was out far from the shore, until it looked like a black line far away. As he

drifted along the boat began to fill with water, and he could find nothing to bale her out with. He was almost sinking, when a steam-launch came along, and he was picked up by some boys. They had been out fishing, and noticed the sailboat drifting along and filling with water. One of them looked with a glass and saw the little funny-looking man. So they hurried and came none too soon, for just as they took him off the boat sank.

The boys looked at the queer-looking little man in his yellow leather suit and his cap made of catskin. They asked him where he came from and where he was going to. He told them he lived on the hill near the village of Splunkville, and that he wanted to get back there as soon as possible, so as to feed his chickens and pet cat. They had never heard of the village, and began to think he must be a crazy man. Then he told them that Splunkville was a little station on the Big Smash Rail-

road, not far from the city of Bear. They had heard of this famous city, where so many wild bears were kept in a big cage, and where there was a great menagerie of all kinds of wild beasts. So they turned their boat towards a village, the lights of which began to be seen in the distance, and told Jeremiah the railroad at this place ran straight through to Bear, and that there was a train about ten.

Jeremiah was delighted to hear all this, and asked the boys to excuse his getting dressed. He then took off his queer hat and leather suit which he had put on in the balloon. He took a little glass out of his pocket and a comb, and carefully fixed his hair, and then from a pocket drew a soft felt hat. He felt in the pockets of his nice gray suit to find out whether the little bags of jewels and the one of gold were all safe. He was perfectly satisfied with the search, and then came back to where the boys were sitting. They hardly knew him, for he

looked so differently and so much better. Just then they reached the shore, and, sticking his hand in his vest pocket, he took out something, gave it to the boy nearest to him, told them to keep the hat and suit, and jumped ashore and ran up the street as hard as he could. Before the boys could say anything he was gone, and then they all looked to see what he had given them from his vest pocket. They thought of money, a gold watch, a gold piece, and then looking at the hand of the boy who had received the present, they found a little white quill pen.

Up the street ran Jeremiah and into the station. He looked at the clock and found he had an hour to spare. So he got a time-table and found the ten o'clock train stopped at Bear the next morning at eleven, and that he was four hundred miles away from home. He found that a ticket would cost twelve dollars, and he looked in his pockets to find out how much he

had, for he did not want to open the little bags where so many people were. He took out pennies and ten-cent pieces and dirty dollar bills. He found he had just sixteen dollars, so he bought a ticket and a sleeping-car berth. Then he went to the supper-room, and ordered ten eggs and ten biscuits. He thought eggs were cheap and so were biscuits, so he could have a nice supper. Every one looked at him as he ate up the ten eggs and biscuits, and the waiter wondered how he could be so hungry. Then he paid his bill and went out on the platform to wait for the train.

Soon he heard the train in the distance, saw the glare of the headlight, and then the train stopped. Jeremiah had never travelled at night ; in fact, all his experience on railroads had been to go from his little village into the city of Bear. He was, therefore, much excited and confused as to what to do. At first he wanted to climb into the car where the mail-

bags went, and then tried to go into the baggage-car. If engines had not been changed at this station there would not have been time for him to have found out where to go, and the train would have gone off without him. Fortunately, there was plenty of time, and he finally got in the right sleeping-car. There he showed his ticket to the porter and was shown to the stateroom. He did not at first understand about his bed, and wondered when he saw the seats pulled down and a nice bed made up. He asked the porter if there were any other people in the car, and was surprised to learn that there were people behind all the curtains he saw hanging down the car on each side of the passageway. He soon was asleep, and dreamed all night long of riding on eagles, and hearing great owls hooting, and big frogs croaking. In the morning he was up quite early and wondered where he could get his breakfast. He was told to go into the next

car, and there he would find what he wanted. Walking into the dining-car, he saw the door of the kitchen open. Thinking he must go in there, order his breakfast, and stand to eat it, he was about to go in, when he saw one of the cooks passing dishes out through a little window. He thought he would walk along the passage on the side of the car, where he had noticed a number of people walking. So he went ahead and found the dining-room. Here he sat down at a table, and, looking at the bill of fare, started to order everything on it, thinking he had to eat everything there was on it. Before he did this he looked around to see what other people were doing. He soon saw how they ordered, and did the same. Then he went back to the car and tried to stick his head out of the window to see where the train was. He came very near losing his head by hitting it against a telegraph pole, and just missed it by an inch. He was so frightened by this that

he took it in and did not try again to peep out. Soon he recognized the hills near the city, and then saw the tower of the city hall in the distance. The train had hardly stopped before he was off the train and into the ticket office to buy a ticket for his own village.

When he entered the other train he noticed many of the people staring at him. Finally some one came up to speak to him whom he knew. He told Jeremiah every one thought he was dead, and that some boys had seen him disappear inside of the balloon and sail away in the air. These boys had run to the village and told the news, and every one felt sure he would never be seen again. Then Jeremiah told all his wonderful adventures, except about the bags of valuables. He soon had around him all the people in the car, and when the train stopped at his village all who were going farther cheered him and waved their handkerchiefs as the train started again. In the vil-

lage every boy and girl crowded near by to listen to the wonderful story, and the older people were as curious as the children.

When he could tear himself away from them he went to a man in the village who sold houses and offered his for sale. His taste for travel had been formed by what he had gone through with in the last two days, and he decided to see the world. He found some one who wanted to buy the place. He took the money, insisting that all the animals on the place should be carefully looked after by the new owner. Then he went to the railway station and took the first train for New York. After seeing that great city he went to Europe, and was gone for many years. On his return he bought a pretty house on the shore of the great lake near the village where he took the train. His bag of gold paid for the place, and his diamonds and rubies bought great buildings in the large cities, so he soon became the richest man in the whole world.

KING OF THE SWEET POTATOES.

LONG ago, before even the Indians were in America, the fairies were the only people living in the different parts of the United States. They used to go south in the winter and come north in the summer, so as to be cool and comfortable. Sometimes, when the weather became warm, a few of those who were very fond of the water had permission given them by the king to go off on the coral islands in the Gulf of Mexico. There they would play on the shore and go out on the big waves in little boats made of tiny shells, with a little flower leaf for a sail and a piece of beach grass for a rudder.

One of the bravest of these fairies, who would go farther than the rest on the great

deep water, was named Planca. He was afraid of nothing, and ever tried to find out what he could do to frighten all the others. He would pretend to fall into the water, to upset his boat, to lose the rudder. His friends would call out to him, try to catch him in their boats, and do all they possibly could to keep him ashore when he came back. Nothing did any good, and every day they all expected that something dreadful would happen to gay little Planca.

One beautiful day he went out farther than ever before, and was almost out of sight of land. He noticed how far out he was, and thought he ought to turn back, when he saw by the side of the boat a queer little brown bean. He tried to get it in the boat, and almost fell out in the attempt. At last he fastened it with some spider's web string and towed it behind him to the shore. It seemed to be very heavy, although floating behind the boat. At times he fancied it was almost pull-

ing him back from the shore. Whenever he thought this was the case, he would wave over it the gold fairy ring which every fairy had, and then he would go ahead all right. At last, after much work, he reached the shore, and, with the aid of the other fairies, got his brown bean upon the sand, where the tide could not touch it, no matter how high it rose.

Then they looked all over it to see what it was like. At first they thought it was a little brown bean such as you see everywhere, and they had seen again and again. Planca kept looking at it so hard that the other fairies thought he wanted to eat it up, although ten times as big as himself. He paid no attention to the fun they made of him, but walked all around the bean, and finally went up to it and touched it with the fairy ring. Then it suddenly changed color, and finally turned into gold. Planca then noticed a little door on the side, and a very small key hanging by a gold

chain. He tried the key in the door and found it would work all right. Then, before he opened the door, he called all the other fairies about him, and told them the following story :

“ My friends, before I open this door I wish to let you know what may happen, and then, knowing what I do, you can decide as to whether you wish it open or not. Listen most carefully, then, to what I am about to tell you. I may be wrong in what I think, but feel quite sure I am right.

“ I think this is the home of the King of the Sweet Potatoes, and, if I open the door, he will come out and grow to his real size and call all his servants to him. Some of you may not know who he is, and how bright and yellow he looks, and how many servants he has. Many years ago he lived in a great meadow and had all his family around him. He had thousands of servants who worked for him ; and they planted little yellow balls in

the earth, and from them came great large yellow potatoes, which they cooked and ate. Because of this he was called King of the Sweet Potatoes. But he would not obey our king, and thought he could be a fairy himself. He went to see the great black owl, who was the wisest of all the birds, and knew all about magic and fairies. He gave him a present of a fine potato, all cut up and in a little basket made of rose leaves. This pleased the owl, who was very fond of sweet potatoes, so, when he heard what was wanted, he told where he could find the magic flower which gave the fairies all their power. Once a year the king of the fairies had to go to this place, on the evening of June 24, and drink the honey out of the one little pale white flower which blossomed for only that night. Unless he did this all the fairies would soon die and the king would dry up and blow away. The owl was so pleased with the thought of the nice feast he

was to have that he forgot to tell him where to find the flower and what day to go there. He gave him two dried leaves and told him to wear them around his neck. They were the leaves of the magic flower, and gave great power to whoever had them.

“He went off quite happy, and thought he could do just what he wanted. He first ordered a lot of brown beans to be brought him and turned them into gold. Then he tried making himself big and little, and finally wished himself inside a brown bean. He then had it turn into a little house made out of a gold bean, and then went to sleep, so pleased was he with all he had done. He slept so long that his servants thought he must have died. At last they tried to open the door and pull him out, but they could do nothing. So they went to the black owl to see what he could tell them about their master.

“They found the owl fast asleep, so they

waited until he woke up. Just as they were going to speak to him, a storm of wind came and blew down all the trees. They fell over on the servants and crushed them flat, so they could not speak. When they could talk they were not able to find the owl, who had flown far away to another great forest. The same wind took all the brown beans high up in the air and blew them off into the ocean, and there they have been ever since.

“If I open this door he will come out and will have more power than any of us, except the king. Then he will hurry to where the magic flower is and drink the honey to-night, before the king can get there, for he now knows where it can be found.”

Planca did not notice a black owl that had drawn near as he talked, and was now right in front of him. He was very large and blacker than anything you have ever seen. He stood in front of the puzzled fairy, and looked at him

and then at the golden bean. Then he hopped off a little distance, shut one eye, and stood on one foot. Then he came right up by Planca, and opened his mouth as if to speak. All the fairies listened attentively to what was said by this strange owl.

“Planca, I see you do not remember me, nor how you helped me long ago. I have not forgotten how you pulled me out of the burning tree in the wood where I lived. I was fast asleep and did not know that the tree was on fire. Then, after you saved my life, you gave me some nice things to eat and drink. You carried me in your little carriage drawn by black beetles to the cool cave, where I have lived ever since. There we watched the great forest burn up and all the trees disappear. I promised then to help you at some time when you and all the fairies would want me very much. The hour has come, and I am here to keep my word.

“ You know who is in this bean, and that he soon will come out, and then will try to get to the flower before the king. In two hours the sun will begin to set, and this evening is the time to drink the honey of the wonderful flower. Do just as I tell you and all will go well. You cannot stop him from coming out of the bean, but you can prevent his becoming your master, and making your king and all you fairies his slaves forever.

“ Take all the yellow shells you can find and put them in a ring around the bean. Then get some banana leaves and squeeze their juice over the shells.”

The fairies worked very quickly, and soon had done all the owl told them. Then they made little holes in the sand and hid in them, pulling over the holes little pebbles. They left a little wee bit of an opening through which they could look to see what would happen. They had hardly hidden themselves before the

bean began to grow, getting bigger and bigger, until it filled the ring inside of the shells. Then it began to shoot up, until it was so high you could not see the top of it. From all sides of it shot out great flames, and there was a crackling noise, as if dry sticks were burning up. Suddenly there was a noise as loud as a thousand cannon going off at once, and the bean fell into little pieces. In the middle of the ring stood a great big fat pig. It ran all around the ring of shells, but did not try to go outside of them. Planca then noticed for the first time on top of each shell a great black owl. These owls looked so much alike that it was impossible to tell one from another. Nor could the little fairy tell which was his friend.

Just then he heard most terrible squeals from the pig, and, looking that way, saw on his back another black owl. This owl he was sure was the one who spoke to him, and he seemed to be so busy as to notice nothing except what

he was doing. All the owls were also intent upon watching what was going on. Planca looked very carefully, and saw the pig try to throw the owl off. Every time the pig shook, the owl would dig his feet into his sides and peck his back with his sharp beak. Finally the pig began to be tired, and gave one terrible shake. He shook so hard that he fell apart, and every piece turned into a little black pig, about as big as a mouse. The head alone did not do this, but rolled over and over, growing longer as it did so, and at last turned into a long black snake.

As soon as the owls saw the pigs they ran after them and ate them up. Then they went back outside the ring of shells, and the head owl flew off to a tree near by, and brought back in his beak a piece of dry bark. He rubbed this against a piece of dry wood, and soon had it on fire. Then he threw it down on one of the shells, and it set fire to the banana

juice. At once there sprang up great flames of green fire, turning out and in from the shell ring. As they shot out they became blue and pink, and at the end of each flame appeared great long spears of gold. The snake tried to pass through the fire, but was stabbed every time by one of the spears. Then it wriggled slowly around the ring, being all the while hit with fiery thrusts from the flaming spears. It grew weaker and weaker, opened its mouth to gasp for breath, and at the same moment there flew out a bird, carrying in its mouth a little sweet potato. The bird started to fly as the snake fell dead, but found the flames shooting together over its head. The heat became so great that it was burned up, and the little potato fell to the ground. There it began to grow and to send up a large vine filled with flowers.

These flowers filled the air with a sweet perfume which became stronger all the time.

The vine spread out until it almost covered the entire ring, and went up in the air so high as to be far above the flames of fire. On top of it appeared a little house, and from a window came out a balloon. To it was fastened a small chair, and in it sat a man carrying a gold chain with a key fastened to it. Around his neck was a silken cord, and to it was fastened two dried flower leaves.

As soon as the fairies saw this man and the leaves, they recognized him as the King of the Sweet Potatoes, and they knew this must be so when they saw what came out of the flowers. Thousands of funny little yellow men, all wearing bright-yellow hats and clothes of the same color, were sailing out from all the many flowers on the vine. They had wings made of the flowers, and they carried in their hands tiny cups filled with yellow dust which they had gathered from the flowers. This dust they dropped on the flames and put the fire

out. But as they did so the black owls flew towards them, and with their beaks pecked out their wings, and the great wind blowing carried them off into the sea, where they were all drowned.

Planca now looked anxiously at the king, who was quickly floating away, rising all the time higher and higher. He knew that, unless something happened very soon, the magic flower would be reached, and the honey put in a golden bottle the king carried in his hand, and then locked in a little diamond box by the golden key. Then drinking the honey, when he wanted during the year, all the power would go from the fairies, and they would be slaves forever of this awful man. Surely something must happen to stop him; the great black owl must keep his word.

Planca looked to see what had become of the owls, and especially the one who had talked to him. He called to the other fairies to find out

if they knew or had seen anything which he had failed to notice. He found they knew no more than he did, and so looked first at the ring, before again gazing at the rapidly disappearing balloon.

In the ring there was no longer any house or vine. The flowers had all gone; only the ring of shells stood there, looking as if there had never been any fire. The sand in the ring was as white and clean as on any other part of the beach, and on it was nothing, not even a broken flower or little leaf from the great vine which had been there such a short time before. All was still and quiet in the glare of the now setting sun.

Then he looked up at the sky to see what had become of the balloon. Far up in the heavens he saw a little speck looking like a ball of fire in the light of the sun. It seemed to be still moving very fast and towards the mainland, in the very direction where the magic

flower grew. As he was looking, hoping for the best, it looked as if a lot of black specks were moving towards the balloon. At first he thought they must be little wind clouds, blown along by the tremendous gale. Soon they all came together right over the bright-red ball of fire. Then they seemed to touch it, to push it down, to try to break it. At first it fell very slowly, then faster. Then there was heard a cry like that of a wildcat in the dark woods at night. Then a great huge eagle could be seen flying down towards the ocean, followed by a number of black owls. Nearer and nearer did they come, and the owls had almost caught the eagle, when he turned into a fish-hawk, flying more swiftly than had the eagle. Then a great black owl came out ahead of the others and darted swiftly after the hawk. The hawk, seeing this, dropped close to the water and began to turn into a whale, when the owl seized in its beak something hanging around

the neck of the bird. The bird kept on changing into a whale, and finally fell into the water. Planca thought he never in his life had seen such a monster as the whale which swam off so swiftly, soon being lost to sight.

As he wondered what it all meant he heard a noise by the hole where he still was hid. He looked out and saw his friend, the owl, eating up two dried flower leaves. He came out of his hole and so did all the other fairies. They all marched up in front of their friend and thanked him for all he had done, Planca especially dwelling on how much help he had been to them all. The owl seemed much pleased and really laughed out loud.

“I will tell you,” he said, “what I have done for you, and why I did it.

“The whale is the King of the Sweet Potatoes, and he must always remain a whale, as I have eaten up the magic flower leaves which he carried around his neck. He can never hurt

you any more, and will have to swim around in the water until he is killed by a swordfish. This swordfish is my son, whom he changed into one, because he would not tell where I kept my magic book which gave me all my power. Ever since then I have been waiting to catch him, so I could punish his wickedness, which was far worse after all I did for him. Now I shall go home, and when my son has killed the wicked king, I will read out of my book the words which will again bring him back to me."

As he said this the great owl flew away towards the land of the magic flower. Then the fairies remembered, what they had forgotten, about the grandfather of their king. He was the head of all the fairies and brownies, the little elves, and all the goblins. He never showed himself, except once in a great while, when he had all the kings of the magic people meet him in his golden cave. At other times

he would be seen as an owl, a magic flower on the 24th of June, and the great blue diamond of the north pole for Santa Claus.

So remembering this, the fairies were very happy, and when they met their king, told him how they had seen the Great Ruler of all Magic. And on every 24th of June the fairies dance around their great oak tree and sing the song of Planca, about the wicked King of the Sweet Potatoes and how he was turned into a brown whale.

THE GOLDEN SUNSET.

WHEN you have looked at the beautiful clouds as the sun was setting, you have often wondered how it all happened. You saw green and blue sky, great streaks of yellow and red, with bright-pink clouds away up overhead. Then there came a most wonderful transformation, for over everything came a golden light. It was far more beautiful in color than the purest and finest piece of gold you ever saw. It almost seemed that some one must surely be throwing down great handfuls of gold dust from the sky.

This story is to let you know how these golden sunsets came, and why we see them now. If you do not believe in fairies or do not care to hear about them, I am afraid you

will not like this story. It is all about what happened in the kingdom of the fairies long ago, and how the wind goblins tried to drive the fairies out of the sky, so they could have it all to themselves, and do just whatever they wished.

You know, of course, who the wind goblins are. You can see them chasing around after each other when the great black and yellow wind clouds come swiftly across the sky. Then they delight to tear up trees, to turn over barns, to pull off hats, and make them go spinning away from their owners at a great rate. They love to do all these queer things, and many others which it would take a long time to tell about.

But these little goblins were not always as good and well-behaved as they are now. Long ago they were very naughty, and thought they could disobey the great king of all the fairies. At first they did not try to do anything very

bad, but only played tricks on the fairies as they went flying through the air or were out for a drive on their butterfly steeds. They would come whisking along, and before the little fairy knew what had happened, he would find himself turning somersaults in the air. Another fairy would be carried on to the top of some high hill and would find himself on the highest branch of some great pine tree. The butterfly would be blown so fast that he could not fly any longer, and rider and steed would be landed in some muddy pool or on some sharp hawthorn bush.

Then the goblins became still bolder, and would blow out the lights at the dances of the fairies. They would carry away the insect musicians, and leave them standing on their heads in the fields or far off on the side of some lonely mountain. Then, again, they would wait until there was a grand ball; then, when the king and queen had just sat down to supper,

and all the fairies were having a good time, a great black cloud would suddenly come up. It would hide the light of the moon, and then there would come a sudden rush of air. All would be thrown from their seats, and the nice rose honey, honeysuckle ice-cream, marshmallow cake, and dewdrop candy would be blown far away.

Of course such mad pranks could not be allowed to go on forever. But it was high time to do something when the king was blown into a wasp's nest and the queen was pitched head first from her chariot, drawn by humming-birds, into a great pan of milk outside of a farmer's door. Then the king called all the head fairies together from all over the world, and they decided to take steps to punish these goblins.

All one night did they talk over this matter until the sun had almost risen. They did not hold this meeting under the great fairy oak,

for there the goblins might hear what was going on and be prepared to fight. But the fairies went far into the forest to the golden cave of the king, and there, far in the rock in the great diamond throne-room, they talked over what to do. After every one had spoken, the king, who had kept very quiet, handed to every one in the room a little gold box. He told each one to keep it in his belt, and to only open it and pour out what was in it when he waved his ruby wand five times. Then he bade them all be brave and meet him the next evening just at sunset.

The goblins thought something very important must have taken place for all the fairies to go to the golden cave of the king and to stay there all night. They tried to bother the fairies on their way home in every way they could think of, by blowing them into bushes and ponds and into the chimneys of houses.

Then, in the morning, they all went to call

on the head wind goblin. They found him in very bad humor with himself and everybody else. They soon discovered what was the matter with him. Just about dawn a bat had flown up to him with a note written on the prickly leaf of a cactus. He had pricked his finger taking the leaf from the bat, who at once flew away, so he could not scold him. The pain was so great and the blood came so fast that he almost forgot to read the note, and was about to throw it away as something which had hurt him very much. His anger increased still more after reading what was written on the prickly leaf. It was from the king, and found fault with him for the way his goblins had acted. It also told him that all the wind goblins would have to be punished for disobeying their king. It ended by telling him to come with his goblins at about sunset to the top of the highest mountain in the world. There they would find the king of

the fairies, who would punish them as they deserved.

When Whiza—for that was the name of the head goblin—had finished reading the note, he had forgotten entirely about the finger and the thorn. He was so angry that he looked just like a great black thunder-head, all twisted and curled, ready to do anything awful. He forgot entirely that all his power came from the king of the fairies, and that soon it was time to go to the cave of the winds and have his lungs filled again with air. He decided to fight the king, to gather all the clouds around the mountain-top, and make the very worst storm ever known.

When the goblins heard all this they were much pleased, for they thought their chief could do everything. They were so anxious to hurt the good little fairies that they forgot what they really were. They did not remember how every hundred years Whiza had to

meet the king at the cave of the winds, and there have his lungs filled with magic air. Nor did they also recall to mind how he brought great bags filled with the same kind of air to their home in the big white clouds, and how they also filled their lungs. They were so willing to do all this plan of Whiza's would bring about, that they could think and talk of nothing else. They forgot how the mountain dwarfs had been punished only a little while before for being disobedient. They entirely lost sight of the severe punishment of the little spring-water elves, because of the tricks they had played on travellers who stopped for a cooling drink.

Whiza ordered them to get all the clouds together, and to roll them into one great huge black wind cloud. Then they were to sharpen their lightning-darts and use their new thunder-rattles. He rolled out an immense number of great green and yellow hailstones and ice bul-

lets, which he handed around to all the goblins. They felt that nothing could hurt them, and that by sunset the fairies would be beaten.

Then they pictured to themselves what fine times they would have. They would have tremendous rain-storms with terrible winds, so that everything would be blown away, and no living being left on the earth. Then they would try to burn up the earth with lightning, and blow all the pieces away into the sky. The fairies would not be able to have any homes, and, floating around in the air, would soon freeze, and the goblins would be left to do just what they wanted.

They thought all this and much more, and were so happy that they almost forgot to attend to their work and get everything ready for the battle. A word from Whiza brought them back from their pleasant dreams, and they worked on again harder than they had before.

Soon it was almost the hour of sunset, and the great black cloud rolled swiftly over the top of the highest mountain in the world. On the cloud sat all the goblins, and in the middle of them stood Whiza. He looked all over the mountain for the king, but could find him nowhere. All was perfectly still and quiet, and the white snow looked an inky black as the great storm cloud settled down over the top of the mountain.

Whiza did not know what to do. He never had known the king to be late or to forget to keep an engagement. Look as he might, there was nothing to be seen but the pure white snow, on which there was no track of tiny feet or the least sign of any kind of life. He waited quite a while, and at last became very impatient. He thought they were hiding and waiting to see what he would do. So he ordered all to do their best to make a tremendous storm.

It was terrible, and no human being could have lived through it. The lightning and thunder never stopped, and the wind blew as it never had before. Huge icicles and tremendous hailstones fell in great heaps as large as big pails. If the mountain had not been so big and strong, so well covered with ice and so tall, there would have never been anything left of it. As it was, a great hole was made on its side, and down it began to run a great mass of snow and ice. This, when it reached the great plain, made a mighty river, which has been running ever since. So awful was the noise and so cool the wind that, even in the plain, the people all ran into their houses, thinking it was going to storm.

Where were the fairies all this time? Had the king become frightened? If you had been able to look under the snow on the top of the mountain, you would have found the answer to your questions. There were all the fairies

and their king in a room they had dug out under the outer crust of snow. They all wore white suits, so that at first sight you would think they were little flakes of snow. The king wished them to stay there until the goblins had become all tired out, and had used up all their store of lightning. Then, when they were unable to shake their thunder-rattles, and had no more air to blow out of their lungs, the fairies were going to conquer them and give them their punishment.

Soon the wind blew less and the lightning grew paler. The thunder did not sound as loud, and the clouds began to grow whiter and thinner. The goblins were all tired out, and Whiza felt as if he wanted to sleep for a week. It was almost sunset, and, not seeing the king, he thought all was well and he could go home unpunished.

His happy thoughts were quickly driven away, for his punishment was soon to come.

From a little hole in the snow the goblins now saw lots of little white flakes of snow rise up. They flew up quickly to where they were and rose over their heads. Then they felt a cold breath, which seemed to freeze them up and to take away the little strength they had left. Looking at Whiza, they saw he was frozen stiff, and soon they were in the same condition. Then over them the fairies sprinkled from the box each one carried in his belt a lot of fine gold powder. Each goblin then looked like a little lump of gold. The clouds now breaking away, the light of the setting sun shone on them, and the whole sky was lit up with a beautiful golden color. From far up in the air the gold-dust shower still came down, so that this mass of shiny gold seemed to be throwing out great rays of bright-yellow light all over the heavens. All around were beautiful colors and the brilliant clouds, with here and there bright patches of blue sky. Everywhere the

people came out of their homes to look at the wonderful sunset, such as had never been seen before. They little knew what it was caused by, and how the punishment of the naughty goblins had brought this wonderful thing to pass. And all around the world, as the sun set, did the people in every country see the same wonderful and beautiful sight.

The fairies all went home and left the goblins to thaw out. It took them a long time to recover, and then they had empty lungs. Whiza had to go to the king and beg his pardon. It was a hard thing to do, but he could not help himself, and had to make his peace, or float around in the air doing nothing. So he went to the king and told him how very sorry he was and how well he would behave in the future.

The king very kindly forgave him, telling him to expect punishment whenever he forgot himself and played any more of his tricks.

Then he took him to the cave of the winds. When they reached the entrance Whiza was so weak and had so little breath that he could hardly walk or move. He had to be lifted up and carried in by the fairies who had come with the king. Inside the cave the wind roared so loudly that no one could speak. Poor Whiza could not open his mouth to take in the fresh, strong air which would very quickly make him well. Two fairies had to open his lips and let some air pass in between his teeth. Soon he began to feel better, and then was able to open his mouth and take in long breaths. Then he filled his lungs full and looked around for the bags which must be filled for all the other goblins. He could not find them anywhere, and at last remembered they had been lost during the terrible storm on top of the mountain. He asked the king to help him, and soon a hundred spiders were at work making from their thread most wonder-

ful bags. They looked so light and thin when done that Whiza hardly dare use them. Only when the king told him they were very strong did he fill one. It did so well that he quickly had all the others stretched out with as much air as they could hold. Then putting all the bags on his back, he started for home, first telling the king again that he would be good.

He found the goblins almost dead from want of air, and, with two or three of them, had to force their mouths open to put the air-tube in. At last he had given them all their bags, and saw life and activity returning.

Now, I suppose you think that, after all which had happened, the goblins were always very good. I am sorry to say they were not, and sometimes had to be severely punished. Still they never again did such terrible things as before their punishment on the mountain. Whenever they were bad and had a great time, the king would send the fairies up above

the storm clouds and the winds. Then they would begin to throw over the goblins a little snow. That was sufficient, and the clouds would begin to break away. If it was about sunset, the whole air would seem to be full of a fine yellow dust. This gave a golden color to all the clouds, to trees and water, and to the air itself. Some human beings would think at such times that the doors were open leading into the palace of the fairies. But you know better, for it was the gold dust which the fairies were throwing down to remind the goblins of the battle of the mountain-top.

THE BLUE CHINA CUP.

THE cup I am going to tell you about is not one you can find anywhere. You can look in all the shops and on the sideboard in every house you go into, and you will never see this blue china cup. Yet, there is such a thing to be found, if you were only able to go to the workshop of Santa Claus. There it stands on a little table all by itself with a little blue saucer. You would notice that it is never used by any of the snow fairies who work for Santa Claus, nor does he ever use it himself when he takes a good hot cup of tea after his day's work is over.

If you could see the cup you would notice it is all covered with queer little blue men. Some have on strange-looking hats and others

are carrying little bags. All seem to be in a hurry and looking for some one. If you saw the inside of the cup you would find it a pale bluish-white, and on the bottom a piece of glass, so you could see yourself in it. Nor would you find the cup very large, not bigger than a little pea, and you would need a magnifying glass to see all the figures of the men on the outside. But it was very valuable, and most carefully watched over, so nothing could possibly hurt it. And, if you could have been up by the north pole any New Year's day, you would have found out why it was so precious.

You know that Santa Claus is a jolly old fairy who makes toys of all kinds and all manner of beautiful things to give to the children on Christmas day. But do you know that the king of all the fairies visits him once a year and drinks a cup of tea with him? He comes on the same day, the first of the new year, and always at just such a time, five in the afternoon.

About four on that day Santa Claus puts on his best clothes, lights up every room in his ice palace, and has all his workmen put on the silver uniforms. Then he puts a gold teakettle on the electric range, and soon has everything ready for tea. A large table is covered with little snow cakes and beautiful forms of ice-cream. In the centre of the room is placed a small chair made out of beautiful diamonds, and by it a table made of rubies, with sapphires to hold it up. On this table is the blue china cup resting on its queer saucer, which sparkles with gold and jewels.

Soon the tinkle of bells is heard, at first far away, then growing nearer and nearer. At last they sound just outside the door. Then Santa Claus runs to open it and welcome the king. Outside is a little sleigh about as long as a teaspoon, drawn by four white rabbits. In it, all carefully covered up, is a blue diamond. This is carefully carried into the palace and

placed on the little chair by the cup. Then Santa Claus makes some tea, carefully fills the little cup and then his own. Taking a chair, he sits near the little one and holds the small cup in his hands.

You would naturally wonder how a blue diamond could drink tea or sit in a chair and enjoy it. You would have been greatly surprised at finding no diamond in the chair, only a handsome-looking little boy with curly hair and bright-blue eyes. On his head rested a little crown made of a bright-red ruby, and in his hand was a little wand made of the same kind of precious stone. He waved his hand toward Santa Claus and took the cup of tea most eagerly. After drinking it he took five other cupfuls, and then asked for ice-cream and cake. After this he told Santa Claus he felt ready for business.

He asked where he had been on Christmas, how many presents he had given away, and

how the snow fairies had been working since his last January visit. After learning all about the little boys and girls visited, all the letters received during the year, he took again in his hand the blue china cup.

Over it he waved his ruby wand, and then pouring some tea into it, looked down into the glass at the bottom of the cup. In it he could see lots of children of all sorts, of all countries. And the funniest thing was, he not only saw their faces, but also all their thoughts. He could tell how they acted, what they wanted, how much they really cared for their parents and relations.

Then he shook the cup three times, and the picture in the glass was changed. Now he saw all the parents and how they treated their children, and also how much they really cared for them. He found out how rich or poor they were, how much they believed in fairies, and whether they were kind to the poor and sick.

Again he shook the cup and looked at a third picture. It was very different from the other two. It showed all the hospitals and places where little children lived who had no fathers and mothers. It also told very plainly who were kind to them and how every little sick child and lonely orphan felt day by day. If you had been looking over his shoulder it would have surprised you to discover how plainly and quickly he saw every person and knew all about him. He seemed to know all he saw, quicker than you could think about what he was doing.

When he had finished he put the cup back on the table, and asked Santa Claus for the electric pen. He was handed a little box, from which he took a long thin piece of wire. Taking it in his hand, he waved it towards the sides of the room. Lightning flashed quickly out, and on the sides of the room appeared pictures of all he had seen in the cup, and

where every person lived and all about them. In fact, there was a complete list of all the people of the world and who deserved to be remembered the coming Christmas. Then on big blackboards made of black ice, which were scattered all over the room, were written down by these flashes of electricity what everybody should have given as their presents.

Santa Claus now filled the little cup with clear black coffee. This the king took, and dropped the coffee, a very little bit at a time, into the queer saucer. As he did this, there jumped out of the saucer thousands of little snow-white boys, each one carrying a small pocket looking-glass. When all the coffee had been poured out, the king held the cup so that the light from the stars could strike the glass. Then every boy came up and held his mirror so it could get the light from the cup. Having done this, he carefully shut the mirror up and put it in his pocket.

These were the cup fairies, and each one of them was to watch over some child for the year. Whenever they drank their morning glass of milk the mirror would throw some bright light upon it, and the child would have good and happy thoughts all day. At night the same light would be thrown upon the cup or glass at supper, and sweet sleep would come.

Some children were not happy during the day nor did they sleep well at night. This was not the fault of the fairies, but of the child who would not drink the milk or had not looked carefully at it whilst drinking. With such children the cup fairies could do nothing.

So hard did these little boys work that they had to rest for seven years and then work only one. So when their year was over they would hurry on New Year's day back to the ice palace and then go to sleep for all their time of rest. Then, as the coffee fell into the saucer its odor would wake up those who were to go

around the world trying to make all children happy and good.

Before they started Santa Claus took them up to the big table and gave them all the ice-cream and cake they could eat. In fact, when they had finished, there was nothing left on the table, so glad were they to have this treat.

Then the cup and saucer were taken away and washed by one of the waiters, and brought back to the king. He now filled the cup with a melted icicle, and looked once more into the magic mirror. He waved his wand over the cup, and from it came out gold and silver, jewels of all kinds, and all manner of woods, paints, and materials for making toys; in fact, everything Santa Claus would need in his workshop. The room soon became so full that all the workmen had to be called in to carry the things away into other rooms. The king only stopped waving his wand when he was

told that there was more than enough for all the work to be done during the coming year.

Then the king put his little wand into the cup of water and stirred it around a few times. He took the cup to the door and opened it. At once all the drops of water seemed to separate, and each began to lift itself up. They became great bands of light which covered the whole of the ice palace, and then shot up far into the air. Some touched the stars and made them shine more brightly ; others spread over the sky and painted it a deeper and more beautiful blue. Other streamers of brilliantly colored flashes shot swiftly through the heavens and became great shining comets.

Back into the palace went the king and turned the cup upside down over the saucer, and into it put Santa Claus, who had now grown very little. Then he took all the snow fairies and put them on top of the cup. Over

it all he put a red lace handkerchief, and then threw it all into his sled. Changing himself into a blue diamond, so he would not be cold during his long drive, he shouted to the rabbits, and away they went.

In about a minute they were at the golden cave of the king, where the door quickly opened. Inside they went and far down a slippery road until they stopped before a great lake of fire. The blue diamond had now become a green lizard, who took the cup in his mouth and jumped into the great red flames. Reaching the other side of the lake, he looked back at the rabbits. They seeing him safe, turned and went back to their stable outside the cave. Then the lizard climbed a green slimy rock and crept through a little hole into a room which was lit by a red candle hung from the roof. Right under the candle was a table, and on it a yellow book written in letters of fire. The lizard had now changed back

to the king, who put the cup by the side of the book.

He turned over the pages until the book was open at the middle, and then read from it in a language which he alone knew. When he had finished, he took the cup and passed it through the bright flames which crackled up from every letter. This was to give the snow fairies and Santa Claus power to do their work well during the coming year. Then he took the cup and saucer and carefully wrapped them up in a green handkerchief over the red one, and after that in a net made of mosquito wings.

This bundle he hung right under the red candle. Taking his wand, he hit the candle, which turned into a big polar bear. He fastened the package on his back and told him to go on his errand. The bear stood up on his hind legs and began to crawl up a little rope which hung down from the roof. When he reached the roof he pushed his head against it

and opened a door. Climbing through this, he soon found himself at the entrance of a cave and looking out at the morning sun. He ran swiftly over the snow and soon was far north of the places where men lived. Now it was night and only the stars above gave him light, but far off in the distance he could see the bright beams coming from the ice palace. They kept shooting up and in all manner of shapes; there would be great bears, musk-oxen, whales, and great birds such as man has never seen. Then the light would change color, now bright red, then a light blue or a brilliant crimson.

Yet, the bear did not long think of this, for he felt the thick, heavy breathing on his face of Whimpa, the winter demon, who was watching for him to catch the blue china cup from his back. Whimpa did not like children nor the pleasure they had at Christmas, and every year he tried to capture the cup with its pre-

cious burden. This year he felt sure he would be successful, for he had consulted with Darkness, the hateful and spiteful witch who wished no one to be happy. She had told him to not try to stop the bear, but to try to pull off his back the package he would find there. He was very glad for this advice, as the year before he had tried to catch the bear himself and had nearly been eaten up. So now as the bear went growling by, he made a grab for the bundle. As he touched it he felt his fingers sting, and his whole hand began to swell. The mosquito-wing net was full of poison and had stung him most severely. Howling with pain, he ran off to his home, still holding in his hand the net. The bundle had fallen off the bear, who kept moving swiftly on towards the ice palace, which he could now begin to see in the distance.

All this while the old witch Darkness, dressed up in a bright-red robe, with a needle

in her hand, was looking for the bundle. At last she found it, and with her needle began to pull out the threads which held the two handkerchiefs around the cup. She pulled and pulled in her anxiety to get what was within, pricking herself again and again with the needle. At last it almost seemed as if she was about to get the prize, when her needle broke. Then she took her fingers and tried to tear the few remaining threads apart. As she did this all the green came off the outer handkerchief and covered her hands with a green slimy stuff that made them slip. She was no longer able to hold the threads, and it seemed as if it would be impossible for her to do anything.

In desperation she lifted the package to her mouth and tried to bite the threads. The green handkerchief had fallen off, leaving her lips pressing against the red one. As they touched it, both lips and tongue felt as if they

were being burned up in an awful fire. It was but the work of a moment to lift the cup high in air and throw it down on the ice. It fell with an awful crash, but did not break. It had been thrown down so hard that, not breaking, it began to roll, and faster every time it turned over.

After it ran the old woman, all the time bending over and trying to catch it. As she went faster and faster, it surely seemed as if she would win in the race, and catch the cup; but for every step she took the cup rolled two, so the race was soon very one-sided. Just as she found how she was losing she fell over the great white bear. She laughed at him for being so stupid as to go ahead when there was nothing for him to carry. He was so angry at hearing this that he stopped short. Then he reached forward and caught her in his mouth and ate her up. But her red robe was full of magical colors which made him sick,

and falling down on the ice, he soon was dead.

The cup kept rolling on, and was almost at the door of the palace, when the savage old bear who lived at the north pole saw it. He knew at once what it was, and was very glad. For many years he had carried the cup from the cave, until the king had to get another messenger, because he had become so lazy and careless. Ever since he had been waiting for an opportunity of catching the bundle and smashing it all to pieces before Santa Claus and the fairies woke up from their one night of sleep. He also disliked Santa Claus because he was so strict with all the bears, and made them work, instead of letting them play all the while and do just what they wanted.

He had tried one year to frighten the bear who had just died, but soon found he could not be scared. He also discovered, the other bear being so much larger and stronger than him-

self, that it would have been a very dangerous thing for him to have engaged in a fight. So he was much pleased that now he could get what he wanted without any danger or trouble to himself. Planting himself right in the path of the cup, he waited with wide-open mouth for the cup to roll to him. He did not notice the red handkerchief, which had become quite loose by this time. Slowly it began to unroll from around the cup, and by the time it reached the bear there was hardly any of it left in its former position.

The bear stooped to catch the cup, and in so doing his feet caught in the meshes of the red lace. The cup had rolled by and he was unable to follow. The more he tried to move, the tighter he was held, and the more his paws became covered with the lace. He stood up on his hind feet, but they were also entangled, and he fell over backwards on the ice. There he lay kicking and roaring. His cries were

not heard, and he finally froze to the ice. The next snow-storm covered him, and all left to mark the spot was a big heap of ice, which gradually formed a hill as each storm brought some more snow.

The cup and saucer kept rolling on until it reached the door of the palace. There the great light woke up all the snow fairies, who soon were as big as ever, and not little white specks all over the outside of the cup. They carried the cup and saucer, which they carefully held together, into the workshop. There they put them on the floor and lifted the cup up. Under lay Santa Claus fast asleep. Taking a great bell, they rung it right by his ears. At first he did not seem to hear, then after a while began to move, and at last opened his eyes. Then he got up off the saucer and stepped on the floor. As soon as he did this he became as large as ever. He put the cup and saucer back on their table, called the fairies

around him, and soon all were merrily working again, getting all manner of nice presents for another Christmas.

As for Whimpa, he never afterwards tried to stop the blue china cup on its yearly journey from the golden cave to the ice palace at the pole. And, if you ever can reach this part of the world in winter by balloon, you will be able to see on the first of January at five in the afternoon what the fairy king does with his blue china cup.

ONLY AN OYSTER.

WHEN you pick up a little seed-oyster on the beach in September or see one at the fish-store, it does not occur to you that there is anything wonderful to look at or think about. After you have read over this story and know all about what happened long ago, you may change your mind and think the oyster is something more than a thick shell and a body very nice for eating. What I am going to tell you about took place so long ago that there were hardly any Indians in this country. Only a few roamed around by the seashore, but they never saw an oyster, nor did they know that such a shellfish existed.

I.

In the days when the water-goblins and mermaids were still merry and lively, there lived in a little cave made of pebbles a very funny little water-fairy. His name was Flota, because he could lie on his back and float along under the water or on top just as he wanted. He was very jolly and always ready to play with all the queer people who lived in the sea. All of them were glad to welcome him to their homes or go off for a day's excursion whenever he invited them. Every day there was something going on, and there really did not seem to be time enough to do all they wanted to. There was the great rock to be visited away off in the deep ocean, where the storm king of the waves lived. There was the pool of warm water near the shore, where all the queer sand-elves kept their little boats made out of snail-shells. Then there was the great

house of the mermaids far down on the bottom of the ocean, made out of great shells and bright shiny glass. To all these places, and many more, Flota and his friends were going all the time.

Then, again, Flota would invite them all to visit him. He would give them red seaweed soup, and stewed mussels, and cakes made of whale-oil, and other dishes which sea fairies like so much. Then he would take them for a ride on the back of a shark or they would watch a race between his trained snails. Sometimes the lobster circus would come along, and Flota would take them all to see the strange feats of the crabs and lobsters. Queer little crabs would ride around a ring on the backs of snails and jump through hoops made of little shells. Little lobsters would climb poles and jump over seaweed ropes, or swing off ropes and catch others at a great distance away from where they had been. The clowns

were funny little fiddler crabs, all painted up in green and red colors. Flota would almost choke laughing at their funny antics and queer jokes, and all his friends would tell him it was the best show they had ever seen.

But Flota did many things besides amuse himself all day and visit his friends. At night, before he went to bed, he would work hard on a book he was writing. He had lots of very thin pieces of stone, as thin as the finest gold-leaf the jeweller uses. On these he wrote his story about the sharks and how they fight the whales. He drew pictures of the battles, and showed how the water was all stirred up by these terrible combats. When he had finished his book he took it to the jelly-fish printer. He soon had it all nicely printed on the best kind of seaweed paper, and bound in the very prettiest lobster-shell. Then Flota hurried to the bookstore kept by the mermaids, and told

them his book was ready to sell. So they sent their office boy for the books.

This boy was a very stupid one, and did not harness the great porpoises well to the huge coral wagon. The harness stood the journey to the printer's, but coming back the traces broke, and away swam the porpoises as fast as they could. The boy shouted after them, and finally started to catch them, leaving the books and wagon where they were.

Just then some oysters came along and kept looking everywhere for something to eat. Oysters did not then look as they do now, with thick shells and rough backs. They were beautiful fish with brown backs and beautiful black eyes. As they were moving along, they noticed the pink wagon and stopped to see what was in it. They turned over the books, and they looked so nice, and the seaweed paper and jelly-fish ink smelled so good that they ate them all up. Then they felt so sleepy

that they lay down in the bottom of the wagon and went to sleep.

Just then the stupid boy came back with a team of sea-lions, who were very strong and very slow in travelling. He harnessed them to the wagon and started to get in. As he stepped in he saw the books had gone, and in their stead were brown fishes such as he had never seen before. He gave a scream and jumped out of the wagon, going as fast as he could to the bookstore. There he told the mermaids that the books had all changed into a lot of brown fish, such as no one had ever seen, with great shining black eyes. He refused to go back to the wagon, and said some one else must go, as he was too tired.

All the mermaids were much put out at what had happened, for their bookstore was crowded with customers, who wished to buy copies of Flota's first book. They wanted to whip the stupid boy, to rush out and catch the strange

brown fish. Every one wished to do a different thing, and the result was no one did anything. They talked about what should be done, and so loudly that the sound reached to Flota's house. He rushed over to see what was the matter, and was much discouraged to learn what had happened to his new book.

He reassured them all that in a few hours he would have a new edition ready. He hurried over to the printer, told him what had happened, and soon a new set of books was ready. To be sure that nothing would happen to the new set, Flota hired the Whale Express Co. to deliver the great bundle to the mermaids.

Almost as soon as he had given the order at the express office, a huge whale was at the door of the printing house. The bundle of books was taken out, and, opening his huge mouth, the whale put it in there. It hardly took any time for him to reach the bookstore, and there the books were quickly taken from his mouth

and given to the customers. They were all delighted with what Flota had written, and for two years he had an invitation out to dinner every afternoon. His friends were so anxious to hear all about how the book had been printed, and what had happened to the first edition, that not only did they have him to dinner, but also were all the time calling upon him to ask him all manner of silly questions.

Poor Flota became tired out and found no time to light his phosphorescent lamp in the evening to read and write. As soon as he came home he went right to bed and did not get up until about twelve the next day. He grew thin and could no longer eat. But the very misfortune about the books turned out to be his very best friend, making him in the end happier than he had ever been. And all this came about through the oysters, as you will soon discover.

II.

When the boy ran away and left the big sea-lions fastened to the coral wagon, they remained very still and quiet for a few minutes. Then they began to talk to each other as to what to do. They did not think of looking in the wagon to see whether the strange brown fish were still there. If they had there would have been no oysters left, and there would have been no more story to write. Sea-lions are very fond of little fish, especially brown ones, and they would have soon eaten up all the fish, who were now wide awake and trembling in the bottom of the wagon. They heard the sea-lions talking to each other, and soon learned from what they said, all about the books and what they had done.

They were very sorry to have made so much trouble and given Flota so much to worry about. As they had never seen any books

before, and were fond of the kind of seaweed the books were made of, they had eaten everything up without thinking about anything else. Then they had lost all their relations, who had been eaten up by the starfish, their greatest enemies. They knew, if they left the wagon, they might meet the starfish, who were watching for them, so they might eat up the rest of the family. If they swam up and by the sea-lions, they feared to meet a like fate. They therefore decided to do the very wisest thing, to stay perfectly still and quiet in the bottom of the wagon. It was well they did so, for the starfish came alongside just as they had finished talking. They looked at the sides of the wagon and at the great sea-lions, and then asked them if they had seen any beautiful brown fish with great black eyes. They were told that such a kind of fish had been there, eaten up a lot of books, and then had gone away so as to escape being arrested. They

also told the starfish they were only waiting for their driver, and, if he did not come very soon, they were going to drag the wagon along and go back to their own home in the Arctic regions. As soon as the starfish heard the word Arctic they all shivered and went away as fast as they could. They evidently were afraid that, in some way, if they stayed any longer they would be put in the coral wagon and dragged off to the cold waters of the Arctic Sea.

Just as they went off the sea-lions started, and went far faster than the stupid boy had ever been able to make them go. But then, of course, they were now going home, and were in a great hurry to get there, for it was the birthday of the grandfather of all the sea-lions. As they went along the oysters could hear them talk of what they were going to do when they reached home. They were to have a birthday party for the grandfather, and then

they were all to go fishing at some favorite spot for the brown fish they liked to eat. This only frightened the oysters still more, until they began to cry. They cried so hard that a great white spot of salt from their tears was formed right on the chin of each oyster. This gradually hardened and turned into a large round white substance, which we call pearls.

Soon the water began to feel colder, and the poor oysters shivered with the cold. They would shake all over, and then the perspiration would come out all over their bodies. And as their bodies became colder this perspiration hardened and turned to a sort of fine white shell. After a while, instead of brown fish, you would have found in the wagon white shells opening and shutting, just as oysters do now. And right inside the mouth of each oyster you would have found a big pearl, more beautiful than any you have ever seen.

When the sea-lions reached their home, they

were most warmly greeted by their grandfather, parents, and all their relations. They told all the wonderful things they had seen and heard; all about the mermaids and their queer bookstore, with the stupid driver; all about Flota and his book, and how the strange brown fish had eaten it up; all about the way the stupid boy had harnessed the porpoises, and that they had broken the traces and gone away. Then they showed the pink coral wagon, and lifted it up so their grandfather could see it better.

They were much astonished to find in it a lot of strange shells, which could open and shut as they wanted. They wondered what they might be, and where they came from. Finally they concluded that the printer had sent them to the mermaids, and they had been put in the wagon first, underneath the books. It was decided the right thing to do was to take them back again and give them to the

mermaids. Then the question came how to do this, for the sea-lions had sent word to the mermaids by a whale they met, that they were going home for their grandfather's birthday. At last they decided that the best thing was to put all the oysters in a basket and ask Mr. Sperm, their good-natured friend, to carry it for them. So they made a basket from the coral wagon, which they took to pieces. In it they carefully placed the shells and gave it to the Mr. Sperm, who happened to be calling at that very time. He was very much interested in the story he heard, and promised to deliver the basket as soon as he had gone home and dressed.

He went home and found there a lot of friends, so put the basket in the corner, first putting a label on it showing where it was to go and what was in it. In fact, he wrote out the whole history and just how the oysters had been found. Mr. Sperm then entertained his

friends and made them stay to dinner. He had caught many bushels of fine shrimps and wished his guests to taste this great luxury.

He was so busy that he forgot all about the coral basket and the oysters. It was only late that evening he thought of it, and then at once went to the corner of the room where he had left it. There was no basket, no oysters, no little history. Everything had vanished away, leaving no trace of where it had gone. He looked all over his house, asked his wife and children, called up the servants. No one had seen the basket, and none of the guests had taken it with them when they had left. He went again to the corner to see if there was any hole in the floor. Sure enough there was, and just enough for the basket to fall through. That explained it all, and the whale knew the basket had fallen down into the cellar, and had been carried away by the workmen who had been cleaning out the cellar. He knew it

would be impossible to go after the dolphins who had attended to this work, for they lived away down by the Amazon River. So he gave up the basket for lost, and the next day went to tell the sea-lions about it. They heard the story, and when they returned to the bookstore told the mermaids all that happened.

III.

What had happened to the oysters and the basket? Had they fallen to the bottom of the sea and been broken on some sharp rocks? No; the dolphins had carried them along very nicely in their big alligator-skin bag, until they began to quarrel with each other as to how they should divide what they had. They all wanted the pretty red coral basket, and none of them wished to take the oysters. They thought they were a lot of old brown shells which the whale had picked up to amuse his

grandchildren. As they swam along they kept on fighting and all the while getting more angry. At last they began to pull at the bag, which finally broke on account of the tremendous strain put upon it. Out fell everything in it, and last of all the coral basket. As soon as the dolphins saw this they let go of the broken bag, and all made a rush at the same time for it. In their hurry to grab it, some of the oysters were spilled out, and fell down to the very place where the starfish were.

The starfish were much surprised to see these strange brown shells fall by them. As soon as they had recovered from their surprise they all rushed to the spot where the shells lay. They felt of them with their arms, tried to suck them in, but found the shell too hard. Then they looked all over the shells to see if they would open, and finding one doing it, a lot of poisonous liquid was squirted into the

poor oyster. Then they all fell on the now open shell and ate it up. So good was it and sweet to their taste that they hurried to eat up the other oysters. Some had been able to hide themselves, and others were not so fortunate. After eating up all the oysters to be found, the starfish decided they were much better than the brown fish and never to eat anything else unless they had to. How much surprised they would have been to know what the oyster really was—their old food in a different shape and with another name !

As for the oysters still left in the coral basket, they were so frightened by the terrible shaking up and the fight between the dolphins that they all gave a great gasp and died of heart-failure.

Finally the strongest dolphin got the basket in his teeth and swam off with it, leaving the other fish far behind. It was very easy to go along, and he very foolishly went to sleep, just

wagging his tail enough to keep moving a little. Then when he was fast asleep he began to nod his head, and after a while began to yawn. This yawn made him lose the basket, but he was too fast asleep to be wakened up. How surprised he must have been, when he woke up, to find no basket, nor anything to show where it had gone!

The basket fell down right into the printing room of the jelly-fish. He read the history fastened to the inside of the basket by Mr. Sperm, and at once had an express whale carry it over to the bookstore. Of course, the mermaids read the history and talked all night long about what had happened. They at last decided that all belonged to Flota, because he had so much trouble and had been sick for so long a time.

It had taken the dolphins a long time to swim from the Arctic regions, and then their fight took over a year, so fiercely did they

struggle with each other. So it was now three years since the books had been eaten up, and poor Flota, tired out with dinner parties, had been in bed for a year. He had been carefully nursed by his friends, the foam-elves, and good old Doctor Crab had called every day to see him. Still he did not get well, and Doctor Crab said that he would die unless some terrible shock, caused by a surprise, would make him jump out of bed and run around his room.

His friends had tried every kind of surprise. They had brought wonderful seaweeds in, queer little fish without eyes, green and blue coal from the Indian Ocean. At night they would bring the flying fish circus and the crab Punch and Judy show. Nothing could be done to make him laugh or to feel the slightest interest in what was going on. He only thanked them all for their kindness and interest, and, turning his face to the wall, would ask them to leave him alone.

Every day in the bookstore there would be a discussion as to what to do next to try and interest poor sick Flota, whom they all loved so much. They all knew from what Doctor Crab said that he was sick, and they also felt sure there must be something which would make him well and like himself again. They would puzzle their minds as to what could be done, and then would sorrowfully go home, to talk over the same thing the next day when they again met in the bookstore. So it kept on day after day, and there seemed to be absolutely nothing to be done.

You can imagine their joy when they all met together the morning after the coral basket came. The mermaids told them all about the shells, and showed them the basket. Then one of the sisters read to the astonished listeners the history written by Mr. Sperm. When it had been read through five times the mermaids, who had taken turns in reading it, said

that it was impossible to read it any more. The next thing was to decide how to take the present to Flota. Was it best to open a window and throw everything in on the bed? Might it not be better to send the conch-shell band to play sweet airs, and then have a great procession to the house? There were as many plans suggested as there were people to make them. At last they all agreed the best thing would be for Miss Greena, the oldest sister, to go over to call on Flota and bring the history with her. The other sisters and all the friends would stand outside the house, and, when she rang her shell bell, would rush in with the basket and oysters.

So Miss Greena fixed her hair up most beautifully, and took in her hand her nicest shell bell. She carefully wrapped up the history in a piece of yellow seaweed cloth and tied it with a great red cord made of sea-grass. Off she started, followed by her sisters and all the

friends. On their way they called on Doctor Crab, and told him what they intended to do. He was delighted and hurried on ahead, so as to be in Flota's room before Miss Greena could enter.

He found Flota very sick and apparently not caring what might be his fate if he continued sick. He did show a little interest when told of who was coming to see him, and that she had a very wonderful story to read to him. When Miss Greena entered the room he actually lifted up his head and asked for some pillows to be put behind him, so he could sit up and listen. Then his curiosity was aroused when he saw the queer red sea-grass string and the seaweed cloth.

Miss Greena carefully uncovered the history and read it through. When she was done he asked her to read it through again, which she did. He asked for his cap and stick, jumped out of bed, and ran to the door. Miss Greena

tried to stop him, but he told her he must go to get the basket and see the oysters. There he stood by the door, so thin and weak, dressed in a suit of green, as he had been all the time since his sickness began. As he tried to push by Miss Greena he became more and more excited, until at last he fairly jumped up and down with anger.

Just then his friends, hearing all the noise, rushed in, and after them came Miss Greena's sisters carrying the pink coral basket. Flota rushed past them all, and in his hurry almost fell into the basket. He took out all the oysters from the basket, which had now been placed on the floor. He threw them in a heap on the floor, and then began to kick them over in his excitement to see what they looked like. As the oysters were dead the shells fell apart, and there rolled out on the floor hundreds of most beautiful pearls. Every one pressed around Flota in their eagerness to see these

most wonderful things, which were so unlike anything they had ever seen before. Flota forgot all about his sickness and everything except the round white pearls.

At last he gathered them all together and told his friends he would go into the jewelry business. He was himself again, and in a few days was as lively as ever. He bought lots of gold from the beach-elves and soon had the pearls set in most beautiful rings. He gave one to each of the five sisters at the bookstore as a present to show how much obliged he was to them for making him well again. Then he built a fine store, lighted with phosphorescent lights, and in it kept most wonderful jewels and gold rings. These he was able to sell, as soon as he made them, to all the mermaids, who came from all over to buy his beautiful things. Nor did he want for pearls, for he found out where the starfish lived, and was able to get the oyster-shells which they left

behind, and from them large fine pearls. So he was now very happy and busier than ever before.

You can now see why even the oyster has a history, and how he is so very different from what he was long ago. None of the oysters now know the history of the past, nor that their ancestors were brown fish with beautiful black eyes.

THE DEWDROPS.

THERE was a little fairy who lived in a little bluebell by the side of a beautiful, cool spring. He was very fond of playing tricks on all the other fairies, and would forget when it was time to go to the palace of the king. The king did not like this, and told him that, unless he did better, he would be punished most severely. Still the same old trick of being late at the parties given every Tuesday evening, of not being on time for the great dinners, kept up, and all became weary of Tictlack's ways. He was all the time promising to do better, and poor Tic, as he was called by his friends, would forget and do no better.

But at last an end came to all this playing of tricks and being late, or not coming at

all, to see the king. It was the night of a great ball, given to celebrate the marriage of the beautiful Princess Selma to the great prince of all the flower fairies. Every one was expected to be there very early, just as soon as the moon rose, and to stay very late, until the pink in the east should show the sun would soon rise. The little fireflies had carried around all the invitations, written on most beautiful cards made out of finely spun spiders' webs. All the fairies had promised to be there, and Flic, Tic's father, had sent word he could come with his whole family.

The moon had just risen, when, under the great oak tree, standing on acorn-shells turned upside down, the band began to play the grand march of welcome to the guests. Mr. Bull Frog was the head musician, and he had on his best coat of green with brown buttons. He held in his hand a small green wand and waved it to the members of the band as they began

to play. Fireflies stood on little acorn-shells and gave out light for the musicians to see their music. And what fine music there was! for in the band were mosquitos, crickets, grasshoppers, katydids, tree-toads, and little owls. Even the birds asleep in trees woke up, and thought it was the finest music they had ever heard. And it woke up all the little fairies, who were fast asleep in their little carriages made of small pink shells, and who were waiting on the side of the fairy mountain to hear the band begin to play. The carriages rolled up, and the beetle-horses stopped when the spider-drivers pulled hard on their silky reins. Glowworms stood all around and made the grass shine as bright as day.

The king looked all around for Tic, but he did not come. It came time for supper, and still he did not come. The king felt very badly, for he loved him very much, and did not want to punish him. Just as they were marching

in to supper a great noise was heard, and a big white owl flew down to the ground and almost upset the mushroom, which was the table for the king. On his back the owl carried Tic, who was fast asleep, and who rolled right over on the mushroom and in front of the king. He awoke with a start, and turned red and fell on his knees to ask for pardon when he found where he was. The king told him to stand up and that, much as he loved him, he would be obliged to punish him. Poor Tic told him to do so, but to give him something to do rather than put him in the prison in the oak tree.

“Tic, you now stand under the great oak tree of all the fairies, and the law is that all who break my commands whilst beneath this tree must do some great and wonderful feat or be put in the dark prison. Which do you prefer: to climb to the top of the moon, to ride on the back of a whale to the north pole,

or to catch the tears of the moon when she cries?"

Little Tic thought the matter over very quickly, and said: "I will fly to the moon on the back of a great black beetle, and catch her tears when she cries."

"Then go at once," said the king.

All the fairies crowded around the little fellow and helped him get ready. One gave him a cloak made of a white thistle to keep warm with. Another gave him a firefly lamp to put in his cap. The fairy queen gave to him a little cup made of a very small pearl to hold the tears in, and her daughter put on his finger the gold ring of the sun, which shone with the brightness of day. He mounted a big black beetle and started off. If he did not catch the tears and come back before dawn he would no longer be a fairy, but would turn into a shooting star, and go flying off to never return.

At first he could see all the lights beneath

the tree, hear the sweet music and the merry laughter of the fairies. Soon he could hear nothing, and he only distinguished a few little white specks. Higher and higher went the beetle and the air became very cold. He put on his thistle coat, drew down over his ears his little cap made of a pumpkin-seed, and turned on the firefly lamp. Still he could not quite see the way, it was so dark and cold, so he rubbed the gold ring of the sun. It was made of gold which came from the sun, and would shine most brightly if rubbed by a fairy for one second. Then, after rubbing it, the fairy found the night turned into day, and at first he was afraid he had become a bright shooting star, and had already begun to fly off through the blue heavens never to come back to earth.

He was afraid too that the beetle did not go fast enough, so he pricked him with his rose-thorn spurs. Faster and faster went the beetle, and soon the earth began to look

smaller and smaller, and the moon above him larger and larger. After a while the fairy could see behind the moon, and saw the sun winking and laughing at her very loudly. This the moon did not like, and she began to cry, but such funny tears! They were all colors you could imagine: red and blue, pink and yellow, and some were one color and then changed to another. Soon he was near enough to feel the tears on his cheek, and then he caught some of them in his pearl cup. They were so beautiful and changed into so many pretty colors that Tic almost forgot to turn towards home. He fortunately remembered what he had to do, and turned the beetle around, carefully holding the precious cup.

Quickly flew the minutes, and more swiftly went the beetle. The little fairies under the tree were all the time looking up to see where Tic was, and soon they saw a bright light above their heads, and it all the while came

nearer. Some thought it was the sun rising earlier than usual, others that shooting stars were coming nearer to the earth, and a few were certain that the little fairy was coming back safe and successful. The owl which brought Tic to the ball saw the light and heard the fairies talking about it, so he also looked up and heard his master singing.

Tic was very happy and felt all would be right, when he heard a great noise by him, and saw the form of a great white thing almost touching him. He did not recognize his owl, who had flown up to meet him, and almost upset the little cup. Out of it fell some of the tears, and a most wonderful thing happened. Each tear turned into thousands and thousands of little, wee tears, and they began to fall on the earth, covering all the leaves on the trees and the blades of grass with beautiful little drops of water. The moon looked down and saw them, and tried to shine on them and make

them look as they did when they left her eyes. She could only make them shine like silver, but not with all kinds of beautiful colors. But when the sun rose he felt sorry for the moon. So he looked at every little teardrop and laughed at it, and immediately it sparkled with all manner of beautiful colors. And to-day people call these drops dewdrops, and they make them think of the little fairies and the beautiful moonlight.

Little Tic was able to carry the cup safely with the few tears left and gave it to the king, who unfortunately let it fall on the mushroom table. The table melted all up and became little fine pieces of snow, which blew away, increasing in numbers all the while. These settled on the mountain-sides, and soon they were covered, and then they flowed down into the valleys and these filled. When the sun woke up he saw all these frozen tears, brothers and sisters of the dewdrops. He smiled on

them as well, and they in turn became as beautiful as the little tiny dewdrops on the grass and leaves.

So Tic did more good than he knew at the time by being obliged to catch the moon's tears. He gave to those who can never see the fairies what can make people think of them, and also have some idea of how beautiful they look in their fine clothes. So, when you look at the dewdrop or the shining snow, think of little Tic and how he climbed to the moon.

THE LAUGHING STARS.

MANY people think the stars are very quiet and sedate members of the heavens, never joking or laughing, always very solemn. But we who believe in fairies, and like to read all about them, know very well what jolly fellows the stars are. They love a good joke and to have fun with one another. Yet at times they have made great mistakes in their choice of those they joke with, and afterwards feel very sorry for what they have done.

They had a habit of winking at their friends and then bursting out into a laugh. This would make their eyes twinkle and look very funny. When you at night look up into the sky, you will often see the stars twinkling away, as if they were as happy as could be.

And you know they are having such a good time that it is impossible to keep it to themselves.

I said sometimes they made mistakes and caused their friends to feel very badly. The worst mistake they ever made was when they made such fun of the moon that she cried. It was a very sad thing for her, as her tears were so many and so large that they froze all around her face, and finally became great mountains, the ones you now see on the moon when you look at her full face. Before this happened she was very pretty and had a sweet smile on her face all the time. She had a very beautiful pair of soft brown eyes, and the light which came out of them was a lovely yellow, not cold and white as we now see it. There were then no human beings on the earth to enjoy what she then looked like, nor can we now form the slightest idea of the great change which has taken place.

It is a long story as to why such a change ever took place, and why the stars made her cry so hard. I only wish to tell you part of it—all about the way the stars laughed at the moon, and the way she acted. You must remember that all the planets were very fond of shouting out to each other about the moon and how she loved to sing sweet songs to the stars. They were fond of teasing her, and finally stirred up the stars to do the same, and hence came all the trouble.

For long ago the moon was friendly with all her neighbors, and was constantly sending them messages by the great comets and shooting stars. These notes were all written on the finest silver paper, and in red letters, so they made a very fine appearance. Many a star has almost lost his balance and fallen over backwards in the excitement of the moment, when he received a note from Miss Luna.

She liked her name very much, and was fond

of writing it all over her letters, and sometimes would try to stamp it on her rosy cheeks with her seal ring. She never was able to do this, as she had so much color and was so plump that the ring made no impression upon her flesh.

Then she would anxiously wait for an answer, or listen for the serenades which were given her. Some of the stars were great singers, and liked very much to join in giving a little concert. The air up in the sky is so still that the least sound is carried a long way off, and so every note could be heard most distinctly by Miss Luna.

If she was very much pleased she would bow her head and smile as sweetly as she knew how. Then those who had been singing would be so happy that they would immediately begin again, and keep on, often for many days. They really had no other way to amuse themselves, except to turn around all the while, and

this they had become so accustomed to doing as to be a part of their very being, and was something they hardly ever thought about.

One day the planets sent word to Mr. Sirius, by a shooting star, that to-morrow would be Miss Luna's birthday. They also told him it was intended by the planets to give her a beautiful present, but they must know how old she was. They were sure Mr. Sirius could tell them, as he knew about everything and was the wisest of all the stars. The message pleased Mr. Sirius very much, as he had for a long time been very fond of Miss Luna. He was also delighted because the planets regarded him as such a wise star, for he was very proud of himself, and thought he knew more than anybody else. Like all vain people he was very much pleased to be flattered, and so regarded the planets as very excellent people, who thoroughly appreciated what a good member of society he had ever been.

It was this very vanity of Mr. Sirius which was to lead to all the trouble of Miss Luna, and her finally becoming a frozen mass of snowy mountains. For all the other stars were very fond of teasing Sirius, and asking him what he did not know, so they might find it out for him. He did not like such jokes, and, although usually very good-natured, became very savage whenever the jokes turned on him and his superior knowledge.

There was one star especially who delighted to tease him and ask him all manner of foolish questions. He was the great joker of the heavens, and always raised a laugh whenever he opened his mouth, for everyone expected him to say something funny whenever he spoke. He had a habit of growling like a bear, roaring like a lion, bellowing like a bull, and so would frighten very badly all the old lady stars who lived away off by themselves. Still, he usually escaped severe scoldings from

them, as he was smiling and good-natured, even when playing his very worst trick.

This star, who went by the name of Tricki, did not live very far from Sirius, and often made him smile by his queer antics and funny remarks. He had heard the message from the planets to Sirius, and determined to have some fun at the expense of both his friends.

He hired five shooting stars who had nothing to do, and three comets with great, spreading tails. The stars he sent around in all directions to tell everyone about the birthday and how Sirius was making great preparations. He also sent word to the planets that Mr. Sirius had at last found out the age of Miss Luna. She was old enough to wear a white wig and false teeth, if she wanted to, and the very best present would be a great bottle of the best tooth powder, made of powdered sun dust. The planets were delighted to hear the news, and immediately got together all the sun dust

they could, and put it in a great gold bottle. This they sent on the back of a sunbeam straight to the moon, with birthday wishes of the planets.

Miss Luna was not much pleased with the present, as it looked as if she did not keep her teeth clean and white. Now, if there was one thing she was very proud of, it was her teeth, which were her own and very pretty. Nor did she feel very happy to have a great package come with a card from Mr. Sirius, and in it a huge set of gold teeth. This was another of Tricki's jokes, one of the worst he ever played. For as soon as Miss Luna saw the teeth, she sent them right back with a note, stating she had never been so insulted in her life, and wished all such jokes to stop. She also said she was not old enough to have need for false teeth or a wig such as the one she had just received, and which she had no use for, nor any one to give them to. She felt

sure that these things must be very much missed by dear Mr. Sirius, and she hoped he would use them himself, as he was just about old enough to need such useful articles. Then Miss Luna began to cry very hard, but soon stopped when she heard the Sun calling her by name.

“Cheer up, Luna,” said the smiling Sun, “I have brought you some nice sunbeams for your birthday. Do not mind the jokes Tricki is trying to play with you; we all know what he is. Now, take these beautiful rays of light and rub them over your face, so no one will know you have been crying.”

Luna thanked the Sun for his kindness, and rubbed the bright rays of light all over her pretty face. Then she carefully put away the sunbeams to use when she felt cold or sad. She foolishly turned her face towards where Mr. Sirius was, just to show him how she really did look. Nor did she think of writing

another note, telling him how sorry she was for the mistake she had made about the wig and the teeth. She simply did what many silly girls do, thought everybody admired her beauty, and that there was nothing for her to do to make other people happy.

Mr. Sirius was looking at himself in the glass just at this very time. He had been writing an answer to the note from Miss Luna, telling her how sorry he was that, even for a moment, she thought him capable of doing such a rude thing as to send her any such presents. As he stood in front of the glass he saw the face of some one reflected in it, as if looking over his shoulder and laughing at him. He turned around quickly and saw Miss Luna smiling away. He thought she was making fun of him, and it made him so angry that he tore up the note he had written and told the messenger star not to wait any longer.

This star saw all that had happened, and

heard what Sirius was muttering to himself about silly young women and persons who loved to laugh at others. He rushed right off to Miss Luna and told her all that had happened, and advised her to send another note to Mr. Sirius. He told her that Mr. Sirius was the largest and most powerful of all the stars, and if he became really angry at her, it would be a very sad occurrence.

Miss Luna was very much disturbed by what was told her by this messenger star, and asked him to wait until she could send a note to Mr. Sirius. She wrote the very nicest letter she knew how, telling how sorry she was for all which had happened, and that she had just learned from her old friend Mr. Sun that Tricki had been playing one of his jokes.

She gave the note to the messenger star and asked him to deliver it as soon as possible. But, alas ! the star went so swiftly that he ran into some other shooting stars and comets, and

was broken to pieces. The note fell off onto the tail of a great red comet who was rushing off into space. This note made his tail move, and he began to go in a different direction from the one he was going in before. He has been going farther away from the moon every hour, and she will never know what became of her note.

To make matters worse, both the gentleman and the lady happened to look at the place where Tricki lived, and there they saw a sight which made them furious. Mr. Sirius was certain that Miss Luna had put the idea of what he saw into Tricki's head, and Miss Luna had the same thought about Mr. Sirius. They were both so angry that they lost their voices and their wits. When they came to themselves it was too late, the harm had been done, and all the stars were laughing at the unhappy pair. It made Sirius so angry that in shouting with anger the exertion split him into two

stars. It made Miss Luna cry so hard that she became the cold, silvery moon which we see to-day.

Let us now find out what Tricki had been doing all this time. He had been very busy painting the huge tails of the comets. One had been all covered with pictures of Miss Luna looking like a very old woman, putting on her wig, fixing a set of false teeth in her mouth, and painting up her withered cheeks with red sunbeams. Another comet had great green pictures of Mr. Sirius getting ready to smile on Miss Luna, his visit, and his present of a wig and a set of teeth. The third comet had in red and yellow letters an announcement of the birthday of Miss Luna, and that she was now old enough to go out alone.

Then, after giving the finishing touch to these three notices of his friends, Tricki started them off, and along the Milky Way, so they could be seen by the greatest number of

stars. Of course such pictures and writing would attract attention, and soon from all over the sky came sounds of laughter, growing louder and louder. The noise became so great as to be heard most plainly by the two who were most affected. Luna wept, and Sirius tried to turn Tricki into a shooting star. He fired great flames at him; he tried to get the other stars to do the same. He paid great sums of gold to all the runaway shooting stars to try and hit him, and promised the comets long lives and plenty of fiery light if they would only rush at him. In fact, Mr. Sirius became very angry, and did everything he knew how to hurt his former friend. He almost thought nothing could be done, when one night what he wished came to pass. Tricki was laughing over all he had done, and how the comets had looked as they went rushing through the Milky Way. He laughed so long and loud that he could not stop, and shook

out one of his eyes. Still he could not stop, and before he could control himself nothing was left of him. He was shaken to pieces by his own laughter, and every piece flew off into space a different way, so there was nothing left of him, save the memory among the stars of how Mr. Sirius had altered so, and Miss Luna had turned white, owing to the joke of mischievous Tricki.

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